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Sharman M. Hoppes and Patricia Gray

Geriatric Veterinary Care for Fish Patients **1**

E. Scott Weber

There is little evidence-based research and scientific literature available for providing geriatric care for fish patients. Fish can have tremendous longevity. Although the average life span for most fish species can be only a few days to weeks for the beginning hobbyist, it is becoming more common for clients to have animals for several decades with the advent and continued development of improved life-support systems, husbandry, water quality additives, and fish nutrition. This article discusses fish longevity for several popular species, addresses environmental quality issues for geriatric patients, and provides information on the most common challenges, from a veterinary perspective, to maintain fish over the years.

Reptile Geriatrics **15**

Jean A. Paré and Andrew M. Lentini

Although basic notions, such as life expectancy, and thus what constitutes old age, remain to be determined in the vast majority of reptile species, there is a tendency at least for captive reptiles to live longer now than in the past. Clinicians are expected to recognize signs of senescence or old age in reptile patients, to acquire a heightened index of suspicion for diseases likely to affect older individuals of a given species or taxon, and to provide sound advice on geriatric care of such patients. Reptiles are stoic and show few signs of aging, but subtle changes in behavior, mobility, reproduction, weight, or appetite may all signal the onset of senescence to the vigilant caregiver. Serial, for example, yearly or biannual physical examination, blood sampling, and imaging initiated at maturity or earlier are probably the most powerful tools in diagnosing, monitoring, and managing geriatric issues.

Geriatric Psittacine Medicine **27**

Teresa L. Lightfoot

This article investigates geriatric psittacine medicine; it identifies how to recognize and treat pain, and describes disease conditions by system, administration of medicine, and examination techniques.

The Aging Raptor **51**

Tim Tristan

There is little information available in the literature regarding geriatric raptor medicine. Estimating the life span of birds of prey and evaluating factors that influence longevity are continuing to be explored. Identifying disease

conditions that arise with advancing age may involve various body systems including the musculoskeletal, cardiovascular, and others. Falconry, exhibit, and wildlife raptors are reviewed with regard to factors that affect their mortality, life expectancy, and age evaluation. In addition, medical conditions that are frequently seen in geriatric raptors are covered in this article.	
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Guinea pigs and chinchillas, which have become increasingly popular pets, are today more commonly presented as adult and geriatric animals. Problems of older guinea pigs and chinchillas include those related to diet and management, infections whose symptoms are more common in older animals, and neoplasia.	
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The past decade has seen an increase in the number of rodents being kept as pets and subsequently in the number of rodent owners seeking veterinary services. The common rat, (<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>) has become increasingly popular, particularly as novel varieties have been introduced to the pet market. The average laboratory or domestic pet rat has a life expectancy of approximately 2.5 to 3 years although 4 years and longer have been reported. As an increasing pet rat population ages, more owners are seeking veterinary consultation on various geriatric rat diseases. This article is an introduction to common rat geriatric diseases.	
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Sharman M. Hoppes	
Ferrets are an increasingly popular pet in the United States. They are active, gregarious pets that delight their owners with playful antics. One of the issues that ferret owners and veterinarians have had to deal with is their shortened life span. Although literature cites the life span of the ferret as 8 to 10 years, most veterinarians see ferrets as “old” at as early as 3 years of age. Most information on senior ferrets has focused on neoplastic diseases. This article discusses husbandry and nutritional issues of the aging ferret, more commonly seen geriatric diseases, and diagnostic and treatment options.	
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Angela M. Lennox	
The average life span reported in laboratory and lay literature for the domestic rabbit is 5 to 10 years. The author and other veterinarians are now regularly seeing rabbits living to 9 or 10 years, the oldest reported in the author’s practice being 14 years. Rabbits are herbivorous prey	

species with continually growing (elodont) teeth. This feature allows the geriatric rabbit to possess teeth that are essentially “new”, a distinct advantage over geriatric carnivores. Expanded longevity, while generally desirable, necessarily accompanies an increase in geriatric disorders. This article examines the spectrum of disease that can affect the geriatric rabbit as well as crucial factors concerning the clinical management of the animal up to the end of its life. An improved understanding of geriatric disorders in pet rabbits allows early recognition and the opportunity to improve quality of life.

Pathology of Aging Psittacines

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Drury R. Reavill and Gerry M. Dorrestein

Aging processes leading to specific organ problems are not obvious in aging psittacines. In general, birds live long and age slowly despite their high metabolic rates and very high total lifetime energy expenditures. Most pathologic processes seen in older parrots are generally not specific for aging because they are seen in young birds as well. Pathologic processes that have a tendency to occur more in older psittacines are atherosclerosis and repeated injury processes, such as chronic pulmonary interstitial fibrosis, pneumoconiosis, liver fibrosis, and lens cataracts. Also, some neoplasms are more often seen at an older age.

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